

Augustus Donnelly House (David
Harum House)
80 S. Main St.
Homer
Cortland County
New York

HABS No. NY-5598

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

AUGUSTUS DONNELLY HOUSE
(Known as the David Harum House)

Location: 80 South Main Street, corner of Hannum Avenue, Homer,
Cortland County, New York.

Present Owner: Mr. John S. Maxson.

Present Occupant: Vacant.

Brief Statement
of Significance: A Greek Revival house with later additions in the
Gothic Revival style; home of David Hannum (the
David Harum" of E. N. Westcott's novel of that name).

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Original and subsequent owners:

1826 - George King and H. (Hezekiah) Roberts to Dr. Lewis
Riggs by deed dated April 6, 1826.

Dr. Lewis Riggs to Augustus Donnelly, May 9, 1826,
\$1050, three and one-half acres. (Homer Village records
Book M, page 480.) Donnelly was a lawyer and first
president of the Village of Homer in 1835.

1853 - John M. Donnelly and Jane of Catskill to Charles
Wheaton, December 8, 1853, \$3,500, three and one-half
acres. (Homer Village records, Book 22, page 232.)

1867 - John L. Boorum and Elizabeth V. Boorum, his wife, to
David H. Hannum. Recorded May 17, 1867, Liber 43,
page 465.

1869 - Joseph R. Dixon and Elizabeth A. Dixon, his wife, to
David H. Hannum for 1/8 acre. Recorded March 1, 1869,
Liber 48, page 418.

The following instruments are concerned with financial
transactions involving the property while owned by Dixon

Mortgages held by various people recorded December 28,
1870: Liber 9, page 590; October 1, 1878, Liber 20,
page 11.

Supreme Court of Cortland County, Liber 2, page 145,
December 6, 1879.

Judgment Book 5, page 280.

Assignment of Mortgage, January 14, 1880, Liber F,

page 204. August 13, 1880, Liber F, page 206; July 17, 1880, Liber G, page 288.

Notice of Foreclosure of the Mortgage, April 1, 1887, Liber 2, page 58.

- 1887 - Foreclosure of the Mortgage, Date of Sale, June 25, 1887. David H. Hannum and Lois B. Hannum to Elmira Bartholomew, sale price \$6,520.00, recorded June 29, 1887.
- 1889 - Warranty Deed, August 15, 1889, Liber 82, page 174. Elmira Bartholomew to Benjamin Starr for 21/100 acre.
- 1889 - Elmira Bartholomew to Henry P. Miller and Hatti Miller, recorded September 23, 1889, Liber 84, page 253.
- 1895 - Heirs of Elmira Bartholomew, Lewis Bartholomew and Mary M. Bartholomew, his wife, Charles Bartholomew and Lillie, his wife, and John H. Bartholomew and Hattie E., his wife to Robert T. Turner, recorded January 22, 1895, Liber 94, page 28.
- 1895 - Henry P. Miller and Hattie Miller, his wife, to Robert T. Turner (property as described in deed recorded September 23, 1889, Liber 84, page 253) September 17, 1895, recorded Liber 93, page 282.
- 1914 - Will of Robert T. Turner, recorded March 9, 1914, Liber 132, page 378. Leaves property to four children: Sara T. Bickford, Elizabeth V. Turner, Samuel G. H. Turner, and Robert T. Turner, Jr.

Sara Turner Bickford, Elizabeth V. Turner, Samuel G. H. Turner, and Robert T. Turner, and Maude Mac C. Turner, wife of Samuel G. H. Turner to Benjamin Starr and Minnie P. Starr, his wife, a deed for land in addition to that granted in August 15, 1889, Liber 82, page 174.
- 1918 - Sara Turner Bickford, Elizabeth V. Turner, Samuel G. H. Turner and Maude Mac C. Turner, his wife, and Robert T. Turner to Arthur Fitzpatrick and Nellie Fitzpatrick, his wife. Recorded January 1, 1918, Liber 132, page 554.

Mortgage recorded February 15, 1918, Liber 61, page 38, \$700 on premise described in deed of January 1, 1918, recorded in Liber 132, page 554; discharges August 2, 1920.
- 1920 - Arthur Fitzpatrick and Nellie Fitzpatrick to Randolph H. Miller, recorded May 3, 1920, Liber 137, page 480, part of land conveyed in deed of January 1, 1918, recorded Liber 132, page 554.

Release of part of mortgage, recorded May 3, 1920, Liber 1 of Releases, page 388.
- 1920 - Arthur Fitzpatrick and Nellie Fitzpatrick, his wife, to

Sarie E. Bennett. Recorded July 29, 1920, Liber 139, page 481. Land as conveyed in deed of January 1, 1918, recorded in Liber 132, page 554, except that conveyed in May 3, 1920 and recorded in Liber 137, page 480.

Mortgage recorded November 1, 1920, Liber 36, page 520. Discharged, August 2, 1935.

Mortgage recorded April 16, 1923, Liber 68, page 201. Discharged July 23, 1927.

Mortgage recorded November 14, 1923, Liber 70, page 12. Discharged August 7, 1935.

- 1924 - Sarie E. Bennett to Charles H. Stevens and Mida B. Stevens, his wife, and Edmund H. Stevens and Norma La Barre Stevens, his wife. Recorded October 1, 1924, Liber 150, page 39. Land in July 29, 1920 deed, recorded in Liber 139, page 481.
- 1927 - Charles H. Stevens, unmarried, Edmund H. Stevens and Norma La Barre Stevens, his wife, to Frank H. Kinney, recorded January 25, 1927, Liber 154, page 170.
- Release of part of mortgage, February 10, 1927, Liber 2, page 375.
- Release of part of mortgage, February 10, 1927, Liber 2, page 377.
- Release of part of mortgage, February 10, 1927, Liber 2, page 379.
- Release of part of mortgage, April 13, 1927, Liber 2, page 392.
- Release of part of mortgage, April 13, 1927, Liber 2, page 394.
- 1927 - Charles H. Stevens, unmarried, and Edmund H. Stevens and Norma La Barre Stevens, his wife, to Frank H. Kinney, recorded April 13, 1927, Liber 154, page 357. Conveys property described in release of April 13, 1927, Liber 2, page 392.
- 1932 - Edmund H. Stevens and Norma La Barre Stevens to Charles H. Stevens. Quit-claim deed recorded June 30, 1932, Liber 169, page 263. Conveys same property as described in deed of October 1, 1924, Liber 150, page 39.
- 1932 - Charles H. Stevens to William C. Maher and Ethel W. Maher, recorded August 16, 1932, Liber 164, page 576.
- Mortgage August 16, 1932, Liber 81, page 494. Discharged August 7, 1935.
- Release of part of mortgage August 31, 1933, Liber 3, page 203.

William C. Maher and Ethel W. Maher to Incorporated Village of Homer, New York. Quit-claim deed, August 31, 1933, Liber 173, page 316, granted for sidewalk.

Release of part of mortgage October 30, 1933, Liber 2, page 110.

Release of part of mortgage October 30, 1933, Liber 2, page 111.

Mortgage for \$4,350, recorded August 1, 1935, Liber 85, page 474. Discharged November 14, 1949.

1943 - William C. Maher and Ethel W. Maher, his wife of 25 Stevenson Street, Cortland, New York, to John S. Maxson of 18 Clinton Street, Homer, New York. Recorded November 1, 1943, Liber 192, page 461. Conveys land described in deed of June 30, 1932, Liber 169, page 263.

2. Date of erection: Circa 1826 or 1827.
3. Architect: Unknown.
4. Builder, suppliers, etc.: Unknown.
5. Original plans, construction, etc.:
The main house: 49' 8" (three bays) x 36' 6" plus a wing: 30' 8" (two bays) x 21' 9" plus rear ell: 27' 2" long and rear garage: 40' 5" along Hannum Avenue. The house has a side hall plan with circular stairs at the end of the hall. Many of the details are taken from Asher Benjamin's books. The street facade of the house and wing has flush horizontal siding intended to give the appearance of stone with overlapping Ionic pilasters and triple arcade on main house, double arcade on wing. The sides and rear are clapboard.
6. Alterations and additions: Augustus Donnelly's law office stood to the south of the house. Although it matches the north wing, it is not known if it was attached to the house, or was a separate wing. Sometime before 1870, it was moved to the rear and attached to the house. The door on the south side appears to have been built at the same time as the front porch in the Gothic Revival style. The present door on the south side of the entrance hall is an outside entrance and not a door into a wing.

When the porch on the north wing was removed in the 1930's or earlier, the battlements were taken off the top of the roof of the south portico and from the roofs of the front porches.

Except for the installation of modern plumbing and bathrooms

(and heat), there has been little change in the interior. About 1960, some partitions were removed in the kitchens and pantry to make a larger, more convenient kitchen for Mr. and Mrs. Pierson. All fireplaces have been removed (except for one in the wing).

B. Historical Events Connected with the Structure:

It is widely accepted that David Hannum, owner of the house, was the inspiration for the title character of "David Harum", a novel by Edward Noyes Westcott. Westcott's father knew Hannum and many of the events and places in Hannum's life appear in the novel.

Hannum was born in Preble, New York, in 1823. He was married twice, first to Charlotte Hancock. They had one child who died at the age of eight, and shortly thereafter his wife died. He was married again to Lois Babcock, but the child of this union also died.

Hannum was a fairly successful merchant, although he died bankrupt. He had a reputation as a horse trader and story teller. Hannum took part in the "Cardiff Giant" hoax and was largely responsible for its being exhibited around the country.

David Hannum died a poor man in 1892. His furniture was sold by his sister at auction. Upon learning that Hannum had died bankrupt, Will Rogers, who had played David Harum in the movie of the same name, is said to have donated the memorial stone on Hannum's grave.

C. Sources of Information:

1. Old views: On page 125 of American Heritage for December, 1960, there is a picture of the house as it was in the 1860's and 1870's.

Prepared by Elna Merrick
Homer, New York
April, 1964

PART II. PROJECT INFORMATION

These records are part of the documentation of structures in the Southern Tier of New York State, undertaken by HABS in cooperation with the Landmark Society of Cortland County, Inc. and the Valley Development Foundation, Inc.

The project was under the general supervision of John Poppeliers, Chief of the Historic American Buildings Survey. The historical material was

prepared by Elna Merrick, April, 1964. Photographs were taken by Jack E. Boucher in April, 1966. The project was edited for deposit in the Library of Congress by Constance Werner Ramirez, October, 1974.